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Where We Stand

by Albert Shanker President, United Federation of Teachers

Soviets Seek Non-Polish Scapegoat

"Solidarity" Embarrasses Moscow

I was surprised and flattered at the same time. Last Tuesday I received phone calls from a number of reporters. There's nothing new in that. But this time the questions were not about the teacher strike in Philadelphia, or the money problems of Boston, or the Reagan budget cuts or the fight over tuition tax credits. This time, the story that prompted their calls came from far away: I was being attacked by Radio Moscow.

A week ago an information office opened in New York City which will provide the American press with direct news and information from the Polish trade union, Solidarity. The information center, which consists of three small office rooms, is located in the same building as the United Federation of Teachers.

According to Moscow Radio, this information office is being run by the CIA and "Albert Shanker, president of the United Federation of Teachers, funnels agency money into it."

The radio report was a summary of a full length article which was to appear the following day in the Moscow newspaper, *Literary Gazette*. According to the report, "It has become known that the CIA has taken under its wing the information bureau of Poland's Solidarity trade union federation, which opened in New York." According to the United Press-International, "the radio did not offer any evidence to back up its allegations."

The Moscow allegations are, of course, completely false. But, false and ridiculous as they are, they need to be answered so that no one will mistake silence for assent.

The information office is independent. It receives no money from U.S. Government sources directly or indirectly. It pays rent, and pays for its expenses—telephone, telex, etc. The information center will eventually be economically self-sufficient, operating with funds received by selling subscriptions to a news service from Poland. Meanwhile, in order to start its operation, it has received contributions from private sources including the AFL-CIO.

Says Radio Moscow: "A CIA agent, Albert Shanker, is responsible for material supplies. He uses the cover of leader of the teachers labor federation. This organization annually receives \$100,000 from the CIA for international contacts and activities to stimulate the formation of so-called free trade unions in other countries."

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